UNITED NATIONS **DP**

Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme

Distr.
GENERAL

DP/1993/SR.20
7 September 1993

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GOVERNING COUNCIL

Fortieth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 20th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 9 June 1993, at 10 a.m.

President:	Mr. HADID	(Algeria)
later:	Mr. RADE	(Netherlands)
later:	Mr. HADID	(Algeria)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATOR FOR 1992 AND PROGRAMME-LEVEL ACTIVITIES (continued) (DP/1993/11, DP/1993/13, DP/1993/14, DP/1993/15 and DP/1993/16)

1. Mr. ACHARYA (Observer for Nepal) said that peace-keeping budgets had recently increased while the budgets of development funds and programmes had fallen sharply. Peace and development were interrelated and there must be a balance in the budgets allocated to both. While the Programme's determination to establish a solid foundation for peace was laudable, the 25-per-cent cut in the budget of UNDP country programmes must not be allowed to affect the low-income countries where peace could be threatened by poverty, hunger and disease.

2. The world must capitalize on the post-cold-war development opportunities, especially the climate of improved coordination between donors and recipients. The comparative advantages of UNDP in functional and substantive areas and its capabilities should be put to the most effective use. While capacity-building was an area that needed special attention, care must be taken to ensure that capacity-building programmes were introduced only where they were needed.

3. So far as accountability was concerned, proper orientation of the activities of the new Department of Development Support and Management Services and of UNDP cooperation with non-governmental organizations and grass-roots organizations should assist in filling the implementation gap to a considerable extent. However, the services of executing agencies should be used only at the request of the country in question.

4. UNDP played a very important role in the Global Environmental Facility. With respect to the advancement of women, his delegation hoped that the Gender-in-Development Programme of UNDP and gender training and national capacity-building in favour of women and inter-agency collaboration would further support the cause of women.

5. UNDP should collaborate with the World Health Organization (WHO) in the global struggle to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS. Moreover, in view of its limited resources, UNDP must strive to attain the best results at the lowest possible cost. It must therefore thoroughly examine the impact of adding new programmes on its overall performance before approving them.

6. Mr. HABITO (Philippines) said that adoption of the programme approach indicated the seriousness of UNDP in making external contributions truly supportive of national goals and programmes and not substitutes for them. The programme approach was the best way of making optimal use of assistance from various donors. Another noteworthy initiative was the effort to enhance coordination among United Nations agencies through harmonization of programming exercises and cycles of member organizations around the planning cycles of the recipient countries.

7. His delegation welcomed the heightened emphasis made on decentralizing United Nations organizations and national execution. National execution ensured national ownership of United Nations system-supported activities and hastened the process of transferring capabilities to national institutions.

(Mr. Habito, Philippines)

8. His country was committed to human and sustainable development and had begun to implement its commitments under Agenda 21 through a multisectoral approach and broad-based participation in development programmes. A similar approach had been taken with regard to human development programmes which were directed towards the most disadvantaged groups. UNDP should assist the Philippines in further developing national capacity to conceive, manage and execute programmes. In that regard, his delegation welcomed the initiatives of UNDP on Capacity 21.

9. The Philippines welcomed the increasingly active role of UNDP in promoting the electoral process, the private sector, recipient countries' capacities in relief and rehabilitation and combating HIV/AIDS.

10. At a time when the entire United Nations system was gearing itself to face new responsibilities, the sharp decline in expected contributions to UNDP for 1993 was very disquieting. UNDP had played a strategic role in some of the major structural reforms that his country had initiated by virtue of its neutrality and access to international expertise. The expected decline in resources reflected the need to emphasize efficiency in UNDP operations and to concentrate on high-impact activities.

11. Mr. LING (Observer for Belarus) said that peace could not be achieved at the expense of human and economic development. The United Nations must continue to play a dynamic role in human development and UNDP was a unique instrument for achieving peace, democracy and development, having met the challenges of the global transition from confrontation to cooperation. Since receiving recipient country status in 1991, Belarus had become an active partner in cooperation with UNDP. Opening an integrated United Nations/UNDP office in Belarus was a decisive factor in that regard, enabling his country to cooperate with the United Nations system and other international partners for the purpose of national capacity-building. Belarus had already carried out preparatory work on programmes covering the economic and social aspects of the transition process, trade information and the development of an export market. Its organizations were participating in the implementation of regional projects to privatize and reorganize enterprises. An agreement had been signed between Belarus and United Nations Volunteers, and a draft short-term United Nations/UNDP country programme in Belarus was being drawn up.

12. The United Nations/UNDP office had become an integral part of his country's national potential, enabling it to move into the world economy. In view of that, he hoped that those activities would receive further support at the current session, inter alia, during the consideration of the revised budget estimates for 1992-1993 and the budget estimates for 1994-1995.

13. Mr. KHAN (Pakistan) said that UNDP was the only organization in the multilateral development system that was neutral and granted funds and could therefore advise countries on policy and strategy development. It could help countries develop national strategies for rationalizing their use of bilateral and multilateral sources as well as national resources. That would enable countries to coordinate all external assistance and to channel it into areas

(Mr. Khan, Pakistan)

where it was most needed thus avoiding donor-driven activities. UNDP could provide assistance for priority themes or sectors not covered by other organizations hence any attempt to limit UNDP to globally agreed priorities defined in the General Assembly or the Governing Council would undermine its ability to play its unique role effectively.

14. The strength of UNDP lay in its ability to provide policy and strategy advice to countries at their request. That was its comparative advantage since countries were not likely to use bilateral donors in politically sensitive areas. If United Nations funding organizations, particularly UNDP, assisted recipient countries in developing national strategies in areas such as environment and sustainable development, it would enable such countries to use external assistance more efficiently and thus reduce duplication and waste and also avoid potential conflict of interest with bilateral donors.

15. In order to overcome the conflict of interest inherent in the Development Programme's reliance on specialized agencies for objective, independent and innovative technical advice, the support-cost system needed to be renovated. Since under the current arrangement specialized agencies earned 13 per cent for executing UNDP projects, they tended to sell projects to recipient countries which those countries might not really need, thus preventing UNDP from rendering assistance to countries on the basis of its comparative advantage. That arrangement "projectized" development because it forced UNDP to split up issues artificially so as to fit the mandates of each specialized agency, thus making it very difficult to render assistance on a multisectoral or thematic basis.

16. The shift to the programme approach could also do with more innovative modalities which, under the overall management of Governments, could allow funding agencies supporting a national strategy to manage and monitor the implementation process jointly.

17. In the context of decentralization, there was an urgent need to rethink the role of both UNDP headquarters and the field offices. UNDP and the Governing Council must leave micromanagement to the country level and concentrate on ensuring that UNDP funds were used in projects that were really needed and were consistent with specific national strategies. Headquarters should have a supportive rather than a controlling function and should strive to develop a substantive institutional memory in UNDP.

18. Neither the project-by-project approach nor the demand of some donors for the funding by UNDP of a set of globally identified themes addressed the fundamental problem of structures or solved the Programme's search for an identity. The UNDP role in funding programmes under Agenda 21 in the context of Capacity 21 would only result in a large scatter of unrelated projects. The Programme's experience in Pakistan had demonstrated that its role was not in particular themes but in strategy development. Each country must therefore identify the areas in which UNDP had a comparative advantage vis-à-vis bilateral donors for its development.

(Mr. Khan, Pakistan)

19. His delegation was deeply concerned that the serious shortfall in UNDP resources under the fifth programming cycle would create difficulties for the development plans of developing countries including his own.

20. Mr. PASHOVSKI (Observer for Bulgaria) said that his country attached particular importance to the efforts to adapt technical cooperation to the unprecedented changes in development priorities and supported further incorporation of technical cooperation activities into national development programmes and the principle that it was the responsibility of recipient Governments to ensure effective programme implementation. In that context, he stressed the need to focus attention on strengthening national capacities for planning, designing, implementing and evaluating technical cooperation programmes and activities as an indispensable prerequisite for national execution of projects and programmes. At the same time, the modalities for national execution should not prevent utilization of experience and expertise available through the specialized agencies and regional commissions.

21. Governments should also play the central role in coordination. Bulgaria commended the efforts to coordinate UNDP activities with the executing agencies and favoured further such cooperation between the Programme and the specialized agencies as well as aid institutions and funds outside the United Nations system. There were still latent opportunities for greater UNDP participation in multi-funded projects and programmes.

22. His delegation supported the efforts to formulate new concepts for human-centred development and seek new modalities for efficient technical cooperation responding to the needs of Member States. He noted with appreciation the attention accorded to actions for assisting countries in making the transition to a market economy and democracy. Developments in Central and Eastern Europe posed tremendous challenges. In accordance with the principle of universality, the United Nations system should respond to the assistance requirements of all countries in need.

23. His Government looked forward to making use of the Programme's comparative advantage in utilizing its programme resources and hoped that the current programme level could be maintained, if not increased. 1993 marked the third consecutive year of Bulgaria's painful transition to a market economy and macroeconomic stabilization. Decisive steps were being taken to transform the country's economy in the context of a changing political situation and an unfavourable external environment. As elsewhere in Eastern Europe, the transition was proving to be a lengthy and difficult process. His Government had maintained its firm commitment to the principles of a market economy and had reoriented its macroeconomic policy.

24. The external economic environment had deteriorated further as a result of the trade and economic sanctions imposed against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Bulgaria's strict compliance with those sanctions had caused serious damage to its economy. In view of the considerable losses incurred by Bulgaria as a result of the sanctions against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Iraq, the overall economic situation had already had an extremely negative impact on his country's social and economic development. Accordingly, he hoped that the international community would respond sympathetically to the serious

(Mr. Pashovski, Observer, Bulgaria)

economic difficulties encountered by Bulgaria owing to the sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In that connection, he expressed appreciation to UNDP for the initiative to send to Bulgaria an independent international consultant to evaluate the economic consequences of the losses resulting from implementation of the sanctions. His delegation looked forward to further action in that regard by UNDP and their United Nations agencies, including the possibility of setting up special assistance programmes or trust funds.

25. Mr. ANDERSON (Jamaica) said that development priorities must begin with the developing countries and effective use must be made of external cooperation to support those initiatives, promoting national capacity-building and ensuring sustainability. While Jamaica recognized that current development flows were not adequate to meet the ever-growing needs of developing countries, it appreciated the growing sense of cooperation displayed by developed countries and appreciated the Programme's assistance aimed at developing human resources and management in critical areas in health and education. Although he welcomed in principle the new support-costs regime, he shared the concern expressed by a number of delegations that a simpler set of arrangements would have been more useful and therefore supported the invitation to review those arrangements. Jamaica endorsed the concept of the programme approach and expressed its appreciation to the Programme for assistance in formulating its national plan, which provided the framework for a broad thematic approach to address critical economic problems. National institutions must be strengthened through ongoing capacity-building to ensure successful programme implementation.

26. For development to be meaningful, women must participate fully in economic activity. His Government was committed to ensuring full participation of women in social and economic development and recognized that women had not fully benefited from the development process. The administrative mechanism for implementing that commitment had already produced tangible results.

27. Jamaica's poverty-alleviation programme was designed to focus on income-generating activities and ensure that the country at least maintained its 1992 HDI. As for the environment, his Government had undertaken a national action plan to implement Agenda 21. Jamaica was also participating in a cooperation programme with other member countries of the Caribbean community (CARICOM) as a follow-up to the UNCED process. A conference on sustainable development in small island-States would be held in Barbados in 1994 to reach agreement on an effective relevant joint strategy. It was hoped that the Programme would provide financial support for the preparatory work of the conference. In 1992, a centre for sustainable development had been established at the University of the West Indies and would focus on research related to a wide range of issues on environment and development. The centre deserved UNDP financial assistance and could make a tangible contribution to the preparations for and follow-up to the 1994 conference. Jamaica relied greatly on the Programme for assistance in implementing Agenda 21 and considered Capacity 21 a useful mechanism to achieve some of its goals.

28. His Government, in collaboration with UNDP, had conducted a symposium in 1992 to review its industrial system in the light of new approaches and production technologies. The recommendations of the symposium had been submitted and a new industrial policy was being formulated.

(Mr. Anderson, Jamaica)

29. He noted with satisfaction that support for regional economic integration had been a major feature of UNDP activities in all regions. The CARICOM countries had sought to expand their intra-regional trading arrangements in order to create a single market. The UNDP programme of assistance to the subregion was therefore critical and should remain as it was for the fifth cycle, taking into account the obvious advantages provided by the well-established institutional base, the CARICOM secretariat. While the small States of the Caribbean Community envisaged wider association within the hemisphere, priority attention was being focused on strengthening existing integration strategies. Accordingly, it was hoped that UNDP would continue to provide assistance in accordance with the needs and stated preferences of the subregions and member countries.

30. The initiatives taken to decentralize UNDP operations and give greater autonomy to the Resident Representatives would enhance the focus of development programmes and ensure cost-effectiveness. Jamaica had benefited considerably from the effectiveness of the Programme and the Resident Representative/Coordinator modality in that regard. The United Nations Volunteers programme had made a tremendous contribution to Jamaica, particularly in the areas of health and education. He expressed appreciation for the work of the local field office in seeking innovative ways to obtain third-party contributions to help fund volunteers in the field.

31. The reform of operational activities would make UNDP a more effective institution. Although success had been achieved in implementing certain aspects of General Assembly resolution 47/199, greater efforts should be made to complete them. While peacemaking and peace-keeping budgets had increased several times over between 1991 and 1993, voluntary contributions to UNDP had declined for two successive years, necessitating cuts in the level of targeted expenditure to 75 per cent of initial indicative planning figures. Those developments might have a far-reaching impact. Jamaica believed that economic betterment was as essential as the maintenance of peace and security and reiterated its support for the Programme in order to send a clear signal to the donor community that developing countries attached considerable importance to UNDP assistance for achieving their development objectives. Accordingly, he hoped that the current shortfall in resources was but a temporary phenomenon and called upon donor countries to reconsider the level of their anticipated contributions to the Programme as an expression of their commitment to the ideals of peace, democracy and development.

32. Mr. GOUMENNY (Observer for Ukraine) said that the advent of international economic, environmental and demographic problems had made it necessary for States to reexamine their views on the functioning of the world economy and multilateral cooperation. UNDP was at the centre of the restructuring efforts intended to enhance the effectiveness of United Nations activities in the economic and social fields.

(Mr. Goumenny, Observer, Ukraine)

33. Ukraine supported the general orientation of agreements on the reform of operational activities of the Organization. He believed that it was necessary, during the reform process, to make an extra effort to strengthen the principles of universality and multilateralism of operational activities, particularly where countries experiencing great change were concerned. Without calling into question the current focus of operational activities on the needs of the developing countries, his delegation would expect that UNDP would expand its programmes of support to new recipient countries with economies in transition.

34. It would be worthwhile for UNDP to incorporate a programme approach that would tie multilateral assistance to national development programmes. Ukraine believed that the future of UNDP would depend upon progress in implementing the recommendations of General Assembly resolution 47/199 with respect to decentralization of UNDP activities, strengthening the role of resident coordinators and improving organizational structure.

35. Ukraine attached great importance to the UNDP programmes and projects for sustainable development, in particular the Capacity 21 initiative, humanitarian cooperation activities and human resources development. Steady progress in those and other UNDP activities would depend to a certain degree on stable inflows of financial resources. His delegation was of the opinion that participation in multilateral technical cooperation should be voluntary and, therefore, contributions for that purpose should be voluntary. Also in that connection Ukraine had been concerned to learn of the reduction of financial contributions to UNDP for 1992. It was clear that the best way to resolve the financial crisis facing UNDP was to take additional steps to collect supplementary voluntary contributions and to become more active in attracting funds from the private sector.

36. Unfortunately, Ukraine would not be in a position to make hard currency financial contributions to the Organization's development activities although it would be active in support of implementing UNDP projects.

37. Ukraine was in the grip of a deep economic and energy crisis. Since 1992, investment had dried up, production was continuing to fall, and inflation was on the verge of hyperinflation. Ukraine was encountering severe economic difficulties associated with mitigating the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, of its adherence to the sanctions regime against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and of the decline in deliveries of oil and other energy products from the Russian Federation. In addition, uncertainty regarding convertibility of currencies among the States of the former USSR was also causing difficulties.

38. Ukraine's most urgent task was to develop administrative and economic methods for regulating the economic situation. The country was in the midst of a wide-ranging programme scheduled to denationalize industry within two years, agricultural reform, a tight credit policy and privatization of small and medium-scale enterprises. The programme also provided for liberalization of foreign trade, reform of the banking system and the creation of conditions for introducing a convertible national currency, modernization of industry and infrastructure and social safety-net programmes for the population.

(Mr. Goumenny, Observer, Ukraine)

39. The international community, in particular UNDP, was in a position to assist Ukraine in many of the tasks it had undertaken. His delegation hoped that the aid flow would eventually become substantial and include, in addition to technical support, assistance aimed to attract foreign capital to Ukraine.

40. The office that the Organization had established in Ukraine for integrated representation of specialized agencies reflected a conceptually innovative model for a United Nations presence consistent with the mandate of General Assembly resolution 47/100.

41. In implementing Governing Council decision 92/43, UNDP had concluded that integrated representation was needed in each of the newly independent States. The formula for situating the field offices was optimal inasmuch as it took into account the interests of the Baltic States and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). In departing from that formula, the establishment of a regional integrated representation would hardly provide a solution to the problems confronting field offices. Moreover, given the insufficient resources available to the field offices, a regional presence would be mostly symbolic. He hoped that as the operational activities of the field offices increased, staffing levels would follow.

42. Ukraine attached great importance to implementing technical and advisory assistance programmes. In order to coordinate the work of international technical assistance programmes, the Government had established a special agency, the National Centre for the Implementation of Technical Assistance. The presence of the Organization's field office in Ukraine would open up new opportunities in that area in the future, especially with respect to training indigenous personnel, automated information management systems, and expert technical advisory services.

43. The Ukraine field office had taken specific steps to coordinate technical assistance in the areas of training programmes for administrative personnel, reform of the financial sector and the promotion of privatization, as well as the creation of institutional mechanisms to attract foreign investment. It also played a role in coordinating the activities of other specialized agencies in evaluating the social impact of economic reforms. Work had begun to apply for bilateral aid for Ukraine.

44. Ukraine also supported the work of UNDP in training personnel in small business administration. In the future, training programmes would be expanded to include a Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) modality and the United Nations Short-term Advisory Resources (UNISTAR) and United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programmes, whose services had received high marks from other countries having economies in transition. He hoped that in the future the operational activities of the Organization in Ukraine would increase.

45. Mr. MOKOTJO (Lesotho) said that the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development had called upon UNDP and other United Nations specialized agencies to play important roles in the implementation of the objectives set at Rio de Janeiro. He noted with satisfaction that a number of cooperating partners had already made contributions to promote Agenda 21.

(Mr. Mokotjo, Lesotho)

Nevertheless, without an increase in the resources available to UNDP, it would be extremely difficult for the Programme to respond with vigour to requests from Governments for assistance. Lesotho associated itself with the appeals made to the donor community to respond positively to that challenge.

46. On the question of the distribution of resources under Capacity 21, his delegation endorsed the proposals put forward by the Administrator. While it endorsed such principles as geographic balance, however, it also believed that need should be the main criterion for allocating resources.

47. He noted that UNDP and a number of other agencies were preparing strategies to intensify inter-agency collaboration and national capacity-building in the area of women and development through gender-specific training programmes. The Government of Lesotho was actively reviewing its legal system to ensure that no discriminatory laws and policies existed. Given its unique geography and heavy dependence on employment in the Republic of South Africa, Lesotho had long recognized the need for equal opportunities for all, irrespective of gender. His Government's strong emphasis on programmes of immediate benefit to women and children deriving from the important role which women played as head of the family when their male counterparts were employed in South Africa. He acknowledged the contributions of United Nations agencies, including UNDP, UNIFEM, and UNCDF, in imparting skills and knowledge to train women as managers, organizers and small-scale entrepreneurs. International assistance to women had a positive impact on the capacities of non-governmental organizations and grass-roots organizations, whose members were predominantly women. His Government had always supported such organizations and benefited from their cooperation.

48. As for the Africa 2000 network, Lesotho was one of the 11 African countries in which the programme was fully operational. The programme's potential would have a much greater impact if it were to be strengthened both financially and technically and he therefore looked forward to the continued generosity of the donor countries.

49. UNDP was expected to make an important contribution to the preparatory process for the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, the 1996 United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, and the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development. It had also been called upon to participate in the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s and the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. Unfortunately, increased demand for UNDP assistance had not been matched by similar increases in financial resources, largely owing to the economic recession in the industrialized countries and the increase in the number of recipient countries.

50. The winds of democracy sweeping through the developing world called for participation of the people in decisions which affected their daily lives and offered challenges to UNDP and other United Nations agencies, which were being called upon increasingly to participate in implementing programmes outside of their traditional areas of operation. The recent elections in Lesotho, for example, had been facilitated by the enormous support received from UNDP and

(Mr. Mokotjo, Lesotho)

other bilateral and multilateral partners. The Lesotho electorate held high expectations of the democratic environment and looked to the new administration to implement projects and programmes that would change their social and economic condition. The task was enormous and required sacrifices and contributions from the Government, the private sector and the people themselves. The international community's support was also needed to complement domestic efforts if democratic rule, peace and law and order were to be sustained.

51. Twelve months after its adoption, the fifth country programme for Lesotho remained undone owing to the lack of a clear interpretation of the programme approach and the difficulty of translating broad concepts into feasible programmes. His delegation was therefore pleased to note that a common interpretation of programme approach had been adopted by the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) and that UNDP had set its guidelines on that modality. When new mechanisms were adopted in future, the necessary preparatory work should be finalized before those approaches were implemented in order to avoid unnecessary delays.

52. As a least developed and land-locked country, Lesotho attached great importance to the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s and had gone to great lengths to honour the commitments it had undertaken. Painful but necessary economic structural-adjustment programmes continued to be implemented at great social cost. The country's foreign investment code had been revised with a view to improving the climate for foreign investors, and the Government was committed to structural reforms that would create an environment conducive to private capital investments.

53. Social conditions in the developing countries, and particularly in the least developed of them, continued to be highly disturbing. His delegation therefore welcomed the assurances given at the current session to support development initiatives in the developing countries, with particular attention to the least developed countries and Africa. Lesotho pledged to make good use of the assistance provided and the programmes developed in line with its national programmes and policies.

54. Mr. ALIKHAN (Deputy Director-General of the World Intellectual Property Organization) said that the mission of UNDP was increasingly to promote sustainable human development, taking into account social, ecological and economic considerations, and a wide range of development supports, including the private sector. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) looked forward to participating in that process. Intellectual property systems were an integral part of economic and social policy and their positive effects extended across the entire fabric of society. They also contributed to economic and social welfare by promoting and protecting the scientific, technological and artistic creativity of people, encouraging the flow of new ideas and knowledge, and providing, through patents, trade marks and industrial designs and copyright, instruments by which individuals and enterprises could generate income through the commercialization of works and inventions.

(Mr. Alikhan, WIPO)

55. Social development could be enhanced by recognizing and valuing innovative activities, including artistic and musical expressions. The protection offered by industrial property to inventors and by copyright to authors, composers, musicians and performing artists gave clear incentives to the creative segments of society and helped to strengthen its economic and cultural identity.

56. The quality of life of a population also depended vitally on effective control of environmental hazards. It was therefore important to be able to identify, obtain or develop appropriate techniques and "clean" technologies. The legal, technological and commercial information available through the patent system offered an invaluable source of ideas, knowledge and guidance in identifying and negotiating the acquisition of relevant technologies.

57. Beyond those considerations, an effective intellectual property system served as a catalyst for private-sector development, particularly among small- and medium-sized enterprises, by stimulating innovative research, providing access to foreign technology, and by contributing to a favourable investment climate. Those advantages could enhance the competitiveness of private firms in a world of global technology and markets, thereby enabling the private sector to contribute to national development.

58. The supplementary funding that WIPO received from UNDP was a source of impartial multilateral support for development cooperation activities of benefit to many countries.

59. Intellectual property management often called for standardized approaches to legal, institutional, procedural and technical matters on the regional, subregional and regional levels. Experience had shown WIPO that regional cooperation in such matters was a particularly effective way to improve economic competitiveness and thereby contribute to the development process.

60. As for the contribution of WIPO, it was a source of concern to him that fifth-cycle inter-country indicative planning figures (IPFs) had been reduced significantly, thus adversely affecting the ability of smaller technical agencies to provide assistance. Moreover, those reductions came at a time when requests for technical assistance from national WIPO-affiliated agencies were increasing. In order to lighten the burden on the smaller agencies, he invited the Council to consider replacing regional IPFs with Special Programme Resources (SPRs). In addition, the Council could consider continuing sectoral support allocations at current levels or higher through the fifth cycle and consulting with WIPO on measures to increase participation of the latter in UNDP-financed activities.

61. Lastly, resident coordinators could be encouraged to consider the special capacities and experience of small technical agencies when assisting countries in the preparation of country strategy notes and in reviewing country programmes. The participation of WIPO in such activities could be reimbursed according to how well the desired objectives would be achieved.

62. Mr. Rade (Netherlands) took the Chair.

63. Mr. PONCE (Ecuador) said that the radical changes which the world had witnessed in recent years, with the disappearance of the Soviet bloc, the widespread adoption of market economies and the end of the cold war, had opened up unprecedented possibilities for cooperation, which the international community should not fail to exploit.

64. Despite those favourable developments, however, a number of dangers still remained. International peace and security continued to be threatened. The nuclear threat, for example, would remain until the objective of total elimination of nuclear weapons was achieved. In addition, regional conflicts and deepening racial and religious intolerance were factors of destabilization which raised serious doubts about the future of the new world order.

65. The positive political changes of the previous few years had not been accompanied by similar economic changes. The peace dividend had not reached developing countries and the link between disarmament and development had found no practical expression. Developing countries everywhere suffered from the scarcity of resources. The emerging world order had required immense sums of money for peace-keeping operations which, in 1993, would cost $3.7 billion.

66. On the other hand, access to international credit had been severely curtailed for the developing countries, which had become exporters of capital by way of debt-service payments and private investment flows continued to be directed largely to the industrialized countries. The large fiscal deficits and huge commercial surpluses of some industrialized countries drained the resources of the international community with devastating consequences for the developing countries. The restrictions on international trade imposed by the industrialized countries and the lack of political will to remove them had resulted in tremendous losses for the developing countries which far exceeded the resources received by way of international cooperation. In addition, external cooperation had not achieved its desired effect and, although steps were being taken to use it more efficiently, overall volume was declining.

67. The economic situation had led to a marked deterioration in living conditions for broad sectors of the population, particularly in the developing countries and there was little indication of changes in the international economy in the near future.

68. Those international developments had refocused attention on the role of the United Nations and on the need to reform it. In that connection, the Secretary-General's proposals in his report "An Agenda for Peace" was an attempt to provide a conceptual framework for the political work of the Organization. That document would be complemented by an "agenda for development" which, together with the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the forthcoming World Conference on Human Rights, and other important meetings, would guide the economic, social and cultural activities of the Organization. Upon completion of the current process of reform, the various organizations and mechanisms of the United Nations system would have precise guidelines for their activities. A consensus had already begun to emerge around the idea that international peace and security were not merely an absence of armed conflict and that resolution of the causes that led to conflicts, including the

(Mr. Ponce, Ecuador)

satisfaction of the basic needs of populations, was indispensable for achieving peace and, consequently, an essential function of the Organization.

69. Against such a backdrop, the parameters for the activities of UNDP would be fully defined upon completion of the reform process under way. In the meantime, the Governing Council and the Administrator had been adopting measures to enhance the effectiveness of the Programme, exploit its comparative advantages, and improve its management systems, while at the same time redefining the conceptual framework for its activities.

70. In the debate on development, Latin America had been particularly active. ECLAC and SELA had for several decades questioned the linear view of development as economic growth and had advanced innovative concepts advocating the integral development of the society and individual.

71. His delegation therefore welcomed the international community's acceptance of the broad concept of development advocated by UNDP in its Human Development Report. That concept defended the indivisibility of human rights and simultaneously promoted civil and political rights on the one hand and respect for economic, social and cultural rights, on the other. The report showed that respect for individual rights required respect for the rights of peoples - self-determination, the right to development, the right to peace, and the right to a healthy environment. The Human Development Report was itself a step in that direction, although the team which prepared it should be careful not to reduce to a mathematical formula the complexity of human and social aspirations and realities. He was convinced, however, that the deficiencies of the Report could be corrected with contributions from all those concerned. There were certain aspects of the so-called "developed" societies which were negative while there were deeply rooted positive aspects of the developing societies, which the Report had failed to take into account. The international community should be aware of the shortcomings in the Report and should ensure that its evaluation of countries had no implications for their access to international cooperation.

72. Ecuador supported the programme approach advocated by the Council, which offered greater flexibility in meeting the needs of recipient countries. One possible negative consequence of the manner in which that method had been applied was the very broad range of sectors that were currently covered by UNDP activities. While that situation reflected the diversity of interests of the various Governments, UNDP should concentrate its activities on projects that were clearly within its main programme areas and should channel other requests to competent organizations and agencies, supplementing, where necessary, the cooperation provided by such sources. The adoption of a broad conception of development should not encourage the belief that UNDP should be present in all areas of human activity. Activities related to the exercise of civil and political rights deserved special attention and competent United Nations bodies had been established to promote those rights. The reform process under way should therefore equip them to promote democratic values and participatory forms of governance.

(Mr. Ponce, Ecuador)

73. His delegation shared the concern expressed by the representative of Japan that the limited resources available to UNDP should be used to provide technical assistance for electoral processes. While of fundamental importance to the international community, such a task should be carried out by other mechanisms of international cooperation and the activities of UNDP in that area should be limited to providing support in exceptional cases. The Council should also bear in mind the risk that the participation of UNDP in internal political activities, such as elections, might affect its well-earned credibility as a neutral technical body, with adverse consequences for its future effectiveness.

74. Humanitarian assistance and disaster and other types of emergency relief had been receiving increasing attention from the Secretary-General who, with the establishment of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, was preparing the Organization to face its increasing challenges. Ecuador attached particular importance to the role of UNDP in the administration of the Global Environment Facility and hoped that the Facility would be managed in a transparent and democratic way.

75. UNDP should brief its resident representatives on the characteristics of Capacity 21 in order to promote better awareness of the scope and modalities of the Programme. Ecuador supported the implementation of that mechanism, which would help to strengthen national capacities in the field of the environment, an area in which UNDP should be guided by the guidelines laid down by the Commission on Sustainable Development, which was responsible for the follow-up of the agreements reached at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. It also supported the actions taken by UNDP to integrate environmental impact into the design, execution and evaluation of projects implemented with its cooperation.

76. Latin America and the Caribbean had a long-standing and rich experience of cooperation with UNDP. The support which the region had provided to the Programme was reflected in the marked increase in the funds which the regions' Governments had allocated to projects executed with its cooperation. He was therefore concerned by the trend towards reduction of the region's allocations through various procedures.

77. His delegation was aware of the tragic situation that faced the countries of Africa and was fully agreed on the need to grant them priority attention. The people of Latin America unconditionally supported the increase in resources allocated to programmes in that continent.

78. Latin America faced serious social problems. Its statistics on poverty were alarming and the imbalance between regions and lack of diversification and competitiveness in its productive sector had created social tensions which had frequently led to violence.

79. The Governments of the region had in recent years been forced to adopt economic programmes which had entailed enormous sacrifices. The objective of those programmes was to permit Governments to honour their debt-servicing commitments while at the same time developing the competitiveness of certain economic sectors. The protectionism of the industrialized countries, however,

(Mr. Ponce, Ecuador)

adversely affected the competitive and labour-intensive sectors, as the recently adopted European policy on the importation of bananas had demonstrated. New trade restrictions based on ecological considerations had been applied to several of the region's products. Debt renegotiation offered only short-term relief and prolonged the region's status as an exporter of capital. Foreign investments, moreover, were not directed to countries with small domestic markets.

80. The worsening economic situation had led to a rise in social tensions and a loss of faith in the democratic system. In more than one case, democratic regimes had been overthrown. The concept of preventive diplomacy, put forward by the Secretary-General, was of direct relevance to the economic problems of the region since, if current trends continued, deteriorating social conditions could endanger peace and democracy.

81. Given those conditions, donor States should carefully review their cooperation in face of the enormous problems of the region and their possible evolution. A relatively small increase in investment in Latin America and the Caribbean could yield positive results over the short term. If the effort were not made soon, the international community would later be obliged to elaborate massive programmes of assistance at a higher cost and with uncertain results.

82. Mr. SINGH (Fiji) said that Fiji appreciated the work done to identify ways for taking better advantage of UNDP's comparative benefits in the development field. Henceforth, UNDP's challenge would be to translate the results of that work into action with respect to strengthening coordination, decentralization and the elimination of programme duplication. He welcomed the shift from a project to a programme approach as a step towards fuller implementation of the recommendations, and he believed that the new guidelines for field offices would be very helpful in linking inputs from specialized agencies to the particular needs of recipient countries.

83. With regard to the follow-up to Agenda 21, the Capacity 21 initiative would go a long way towards assisting developing countries in formulating strategies to integrate environment and development. In the future, in-depth evaluation of progress made in Capacity 21 would be helpful in identifying weaknesses, long-term benefits and the degree of integration of Capacity 21 programmes into individual country programmes. He was pleased to note that UNDP was assisting his country and 15 other island States to strengthen their capacities so as to protect biological diversity through the Global Environment Facility (GEF). In another programme under the rubric of Capacity 21, the Sustainable Development Network (SDN), voice communications and on-line access to databases had been established for 22 South Pacific States for the purpose of conducting environmental research. In order to make the most out of SDN, additional resources would be required to finance training staff in the use of the on-line databases.

84. With respect to the participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Fiji viewed their role as an important complement to the work of the specialized agencies, particularly in such areas as national capacity-building, poverty alleviation and increasing popular participation in development and

(Mr. Singh, Fiji)

environmental management. Fuller involvement of NGOs in both in-country and regional programmes and projects could yield substantial benefits in the future.

85. Fiji believed that activities directed towards increasing the participation of women in development should continue to receive high priority. While progress had been made in implementing UNDP's Women in Development (WID) mandate as well as Governing Council decision 91/8, much work remained to be done in guiding women in numbers into the development process. Recent initiatives in the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Bank, and the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) were deserving of special praise in that regard. Moreover, Fiji supported efforts to strengthen WID at the field level through the work of Resident Representatives and systematic reporting and monitoring schemes.

86. Fiji had sent a representative to participate in a field visit of the Special Committee on Programme Matters and had drawn some valuable lessons. He looked forward to his country's participation in additional visits in the future. Fiji also looked forward to the mid-term review of its fifth country programme and hoped that the process would provide useful insights into problems and suggestions with respect to any reorientations in programming that would be of value.

87. Mr. Hadid (Algeria) resumed the Chair.

88. Mr. AKPLOGAN (Benin) said that UNDP was the only truly international entity concerned with operational questions of development. Members of the Council should combine their efforts to reaffirm and strengthen the unique and central role of UNDP within the context of restructuring the operational activities of the Organization in the economic and social fields. The centrality of the role of UNDP was reflected in the Human Development Report which had injected a human dimension into the development discussion by defining development in qualitative terms. In Benin, the operational activities of UNDP during the fifth cycle focused mainly on two areas, capacity-building in economic management and improving the quality of life through small-scale projects in rural development and natural resources management.

89. The development process required every bit as much coordination and integration of effort as peace-keeping activities. For Africa, integration meant to promote trade, investment, research and development in all of the countries of the continent. Through its assistance to the African Economic Community UNDP was helping to lay a foundation for a new level of regional economic cooperation.

90. Benin attached great importance to the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). He believed that UNDP would play a large role in that effort by integrating environmental concerns into development programmes. New attention to environmental concerns was a critical need for Africa where programmes to combat desertification and drought were an urgent priority. For that reason, Benin welcomed the establishment of the Capacity 21 initiative.

(Mr. Akplogan, Benin)

91. Benin was concerned that, just as UNDP was being called upon to take up new challenges in addition to its traditional tasks, the level of resources available to the Programme was in decline. A lack of resources would pose a serious handicap to effective execution of programmes during the fifth programming cycle. He appealed to donor countries to focus their attention on the creation of solidarity between all States by cooperating to promote development.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.